

Assistant Secretary Christopher R. Hill
Arrival at Incheon Airport, Seoul, Korea
Press Stake-out
June 15, 2005

QUESTION: North Korea was supposed to respond to the new proposal within two weeks I believe. Have they made any response or do you have any information on that?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: As you know, the North Koreans spoke to us last Monday in New York. While they were positive about the Six-Party Talks, they did not give us a date. So we need to get a date and I think we'll probably be talking to the host, the Chinese, to see if they've had any success in arranging the next session. I hope they'll give us a date. They're probably very busy right now dealing with the inter-Korean dialogue, which I know has been very active in the last couple of days.

QUESTION: You said in Washington that China is not utilizing its full leverage and South Korea is also reluctant to do so. Under these circumstances, how can we expect any progress in the efforts to resolve the problem?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: Well, I recall putting it in more positive terms, that I think all five parties need to do whatever they can to get North Korea to the table. China does have a lot of leverage as a friend of North Korea – as a political friend, economic partner – and it seems that also as the host of the talks, they should be trying to get them to the table. I know they are trying, but I guess we'll measure success once we have a date.

Thank you very much. Sorry to keep you waiting out here.

QUESTION: I have only two questions. First of all, do you agree that the criticism from two senators yesterday shows their frustration with the U.S. administration about dealing with the North Korean nuclear program?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: I think the two senators, during the hearing, were referring to the fact that from time to time there have been different voices of the administration and what I was trying to do was to assure them that we all are speaking with one voice – we have one policy. The problem is not us, the problem is the DPRK and its refusal to come to the talks.

QUESTION: Secondly, don't you think your recent remarks on human rights issues in North Korea during the hearing and Mr. Bush's invitation of former North Korean author would harm the warm atmosphere of North Korea coming back to the negotiation table?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY HILL: I think the North Koreans need to understand that human rights are something that we are going to speak about. We are going to speak about it whether it's in North Korea or whether it's anywhere. This is an important issue. It's an issue of universal values. The United States is not the only country that

speaks about it. We're not going to hide human rights for the sake of political developments. Human rights is something we will always speak out on. I would encourage everyone who believes in human rights to speak clearly on that subject.

Thank you very much. I've got to go home.

###